

“Eating slowly means eating less”

A matter of health by [Dr Norman Swan](#)

(www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/helthrpt/presenter.htm)

“[YOUR DOCTOR](#)”, October 2010

(www.yourdoc.com.au/)

Eating slowly is one of the most widely promoted tips for losing weight. The theory is simple: eating slowly allows time to feel full after a meal. However, surprisingly little research has been carried out to put the theory of eating slowly to the test. One study now has looked at the effect of taking small bites, chewing thoroughly and pausing between times.

A group of women were given a generous serving size of a pasta lunch and instructed to eat as much of it as they wanted, to the point of comfortable fullness - either quickly or slowly. For the quick eating, the women were given a large spoon and told to eat the meal as quickly but as comfortably as possible, with no pauses between bites. For the slow eating, the women were given a small spoon and instructed to take small bites, chew each bite 20 to 30 times and put down the spoon between each mouthful.

The quick eating style took 8 minutes on average, while the slow style, a languorous 29 minutes. Despite the much longer eating time, significantly less food (66 Calories or 280 kilojoules) was -consumed by those eating slowly. This is of course by no means foolproof - anyone can ignore these signals and keep eating or be provoked by the sight of a dessert menu.

So, eating slowly **can** help to reduce how much food is eaten during a meal - and probably improve the table conversation too.